

**ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT/
PROGRAMMATIC SECTION 4(f) EVALUATION**

for

**the Proposed Improvements of I-196 from east of US-131 to
the I-196/I96 junction; I-96 from west of Leonard Street to
west of Cascade Road, and M-37/M-44 (East Beltline) from
south of M-21 to north of the Knapp Street Intersection
in the City of Grand Rapids and Grand Rapids Township,
Kent County, Michigan**



Prepared by the:

MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

In cooperation with the

**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION**

This document has been published by authorization of the Director of the State of Michigan's Department of Transportation in keeping with the intent of the *National Environmental Policy Act of 1969* and subsequent implementing regulations and policies including *Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964*, that direct agencies to provide the public and other agencies an opportunity to review and comment on proposed projects and alternatives so that potential impacts on the project can be considered and taken into account during the decision-making process. The cost of publishing 100 copies of this document at \$27 per copy is \$2700, and the document has been printed in accordance with *Michigan Executive Directive 1991-6*

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APPROVED:

11/04/05
Date


for the Federal Highway Administration

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PREFACE

The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969 requires that the social, economic, and natural environmental impacts of any proposed action of the federal government be analyzed for decision-making and public information purposes. There are three classes of action. Class I Actions, which are those that may significantly affect the environment, require the preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). Class II Actions (categorical exclusions) are those that do not individually or cumulatively have a significant effect on the environment and do not require the preparation of an EIS or an Environmental Assessment (EA). Class III Actions are those for which the significance of impacts is not clearly established. Therefore, Class III Actions require the preparation of an EA to determine the significance of impacts and the appropriate environmental document to be prepared - either an EIS or a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI).

This document is an EA for the proposed improvements to the I-196, I-96 and M-37/M-44 (East Beltline) roadway systems located in the city of Grand Rapids and Grand Rapids Township, Kent County, Michigan. It describes and analyzes the no build and other alternatives, and the measures taken to minimize harm to the project area. It will be distributed to the public and to various federal, state, and local agencies for review and comment. A public hearing on this document will be held to discuss the proposed project in relation to the information disclosed in this EA. If review and comment by the public and interested agencies support the determination of “no significant impact”, this EA will be forwarded to the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) with a recommendation that a FONSI be issued. If it is determined that the preferred alternative will have significant impacts that cannot be mitigated, the preparation of an EIS will be required.

This document also contains a Programmatic Section 4(f) Evaluation for the proposed improvements. Section 4(f) of the Department of Transportation Act requires that an evaluation be prepared when the proposed action may have an adverse effect on a property eligible for or listed on the National Register of Historic Places or may impact publicly owned land from a park, recreation area, or wildlife/waterfowl refuge of national, state or local significance. The proposed project will impact a non-motorized recreational trail. This evaluation must determine that there is no prudent and feasible alternative that avoids the 4(f) impact, and that all possible measures to minimize harm have been taken, before the project may proceed.

This document was prepared by the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT), in cooperation with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). The study team includes representatives from the following areas within the Michigan Department of Transportation: Design, Project Planning, Real Estate, Construction and Technology, Traffic and Safety, and the Grand Region. Information contained in this Environmental Assessment was also furnished by other federal and state agencies, local units of government, public interest groups, and individual citizens.

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